14:International Bank S-5 (1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1

tant elements in a program to attract more tourists. At present Damascus is the only Syrian city with first class hotel accommodations and even here there is an acute shortage. Such cities and towns as Aleppo, Latakia and Palmyra all urgently require good hotels for tourists and other travellers. Construction and operation of hotels should, of course, be left to private enterprise encouraged by the government and assisted by the projected investment bank. There are, however, a number of places of potential importance to the tourist trade where rest houses and restaurants rather than hotels are needed. Such facilities are not likely to be sufficiently profitable, at least in the beginning, to attract private investment. We suggest, therefore, that the government spend approximately £S 500,000 on the erection and operation of rest houses and restaurants at such locations as Ras Shamra (site of ancient city of Ugarit), Saint Simeon (ruins of old city and monastery-church in Djebel es Smaane), Al Rasafa (Christian monuments and Moslem palace), Doura Europos (ancient city), Krak des Chevaliers (crusaders' castle), Tartous and Soueida. As a UNESCO mission has suggested, some of these could probably be constructed inside existing historical buildings, thus leaving the appearance of the site undisturbed and enhancing their appeal to tourists.

The interest of tourists in the historical and archaeological treasures of Syria also provides a definite economic justification for increasing the expenditures of the Directorate General of Antiquities. This government department has jurisdiction over museums, historical monuments and archaeological excavations. It finances its operations in part from its own receipts, but the government has during the last two years contributed, on the average, £S 763,000 to its annual budget of a little over £S 1 million. In 1954 its total planned investment was about £S 450,000, of which £S 280,000 was devoted to museums, £S 120,000 to the reconstruction of monuments and £S 50,000 to excavations. Damascus possesses a notable museum of which the country can well be proud, but about £S 1 million is still required for its completion. The Aleppo museum, which houses many fine treasures, admittedly needs a new building at a cost of £S 1 million, and appropriate regional and local museums would help the visitor to visualize the cultural heritage and archaeological finds of particular localities. Although all of this could not be realized within the 1955-60 period, we suggest that £S 2.4 million be provided to complete the Damascus museum, establish a few local museums in such places as Ras Shamra and Palmyra and at least start the new building in Aleppo.

mausoleum of Safwat al-Molk and the Mosque of Tingiz in Damascus, and the Maristan el-Arjami and the Khan al-Wazir at Aleppo. 172 658

Measures should also be taken to prevent damage being caused to historic monuments through their conversion into dwellings for refugees and poor people, as is at present the case with many madrasahs and mausolea. This would help to ensure that the excellent and, in other respects, extremely efficient work done by the Directorate of Antiquities to safeguard Syria's historic buildings produces its full effect.

MUSEUMS

219

In Syria, still less than elsewhere, can museums be considered exclusively as galleries for the housing of permanent exhibitions. The finds from the various excavation sites require the attention of highly skilled, and therefore centralized, technical services. On the other hand, in order to avoid the loss of treasures discovered by chance, and to preserve certain excavated objects near the place where they have been discovered, there must be local museums, or at least archaeological depositories in every region—which means decentralization.

The Directorate of Antiquities has endeavoured to meet these contradictory requirements, which, incidentally, must also be taken into account in another connexion. It is a desirable and legitimate aim to have a large, rich national museum in the capital, but it is also necessary to interest other towns in the country in artistic and archaeological problems by helping them to develop their own museums.

The National Museum in Damascus has the somewhat rare advantage of having been built specially for the housing and exhibition of its treasures. In Europe, we are so accustomed to seeing old palaces, not intended for the purpose, converted into museums, that we are inevitably struck with wondering admiration at the setting and atmosphere which the Syrian authorities have managed to create for the reconstruction and presentation of three great structures of different periods and dissimilar character: the hypogeum of Yarhai from Palmyra, with its rich decorative sculpture; the synagogue of Dura-Europos, with its miraculously preserved frescoes; the Omayyad palace of Qasr el-Heir el-Gharbi, with its frescoes and extraordinary variety of stucco decoration in open-work panels and towers. The museum's other ancient and medieval galleries, although less spectacular in arrangement, contain many objects of rare quality and exceptional interest, such as an Aramaean stele from Sfire, a silvered bronze helmet from Homs, frescoes from Dura, white sculptures from Palmyra and black basalt sculptures from the Hauran, mosaics from Chahba, a carved wooden cenotaph from Tojanua, jewellery, intaglios, bronzes and pottery of various periods. Space is already inadequate and a new building, where the collections of Moslem art will be installed, is now nearing completion. When this building is in use, all departments will be less crowded and it will be possible to reserve some space for temporary exhibitions.

All finds earlier than the time of Alexander are, in principle, collected in the Aleppo Museum, which thus has a character and individuality of its own. Upon entering the museum, the visitor is immediately confronted by colossal basalt statues, lions and bulls, and huge bas-reliefs representing hunting and battle scenes; these are Hittite and Assyrian treasures from Tell

P. 11A

Halaf, Tell Ahmar and Arslan Tash. The wonderful statues from Mari are more nearly life-size. There are also a great many objects from Ras-Shamra (Ugarit) and Mari which well repay examination. The present building is old and ill-fitted for use as a museum as regards both lighting and the size of the rooms. There are plans, however, for the building of a new museum where there will be ample room and the necessary facilities to display the collections to full advantage.

At the present time, there are local museums at Suweida and Palmyra. The former contains an interesting collection of basalt sculpture and mosaics; the latter is scarcely more than a depository crowded with statues and stone inscriptions. The Directorate of Antiquities intends to establish other small museums at Deir-es-Zor, Homs, Hama, and Tartus or Latakia. It is hoped to provide them with a library, where the principal publications relating to the region covered, together with a few general historical and archaeological works, would be available. The existing library at Damascus is extremely useful, but the one at Aleppo would be improved by the acquisition of some additional works.

In conclusion, the following list gives the titles of a few works relating to the collections referred to above:

ABDUL-HAK, S., "L'exposition au musée de Damas des découvertes archéologiques de l'année 1932", *Museum*, vol. VII, 1954 (not yet published).

ABDUL-HAK, S. and A., *Catalogue illustré du département des antiquités gréco-romaines au musée de Damas*, Damascus, 1951.

ECOCHARD, M., "Le nouveau musée de Damas", *Museum*, vol. 33-36, 1946, p. 107-44.

PEARSON, H. F., *A guide to the synagogue of Dura-Europos*, Beirut, 1939.

PLOEG DE ROTROU, G., *Le musée national d'Alep*, Aleppo, 1932.

SAOUAF, S., *Alep, guide du visiteur*, Aleppo, 1951, p. 26-33.

MEANS OF PUBLICIZING MONUMENTS AND PRESENTING THEM TO BEST ADVANTAGE

The efforts made by the Syrian Directorate of Antiquities to promote the study and preservation of historical monuments might yield even better results if they were more widely understood and supported. By means of intelligent propaganda through the three channels of education, tourist development and town planning, it should be possible gradually to arouse general sympathy and interest. The important point is to show clearly that historic monuments are not merely an outdated and costly burden, but have a positive and lively interest for every individual. A publicity campaign on these lines has already been successfully undertaken, but in certain respects it might be amplified and developed.

In the field of education, interest in the country's artistic assets can be aroused by the distribution of illustrated publications and the organization of exhibitions and lectures. There are already some publications of this kind dealing with Damascus, Palmyra, Bosra and Aleppo and more could easily be produced; they should contain fine photographs and be translated into several languages. After organizing a few exhibitions of paintings and a brilliant ceremony to mark the opening of the Qasr el-Heir galleries in the Damascus Museum, the Directorate of Antiquities has recently made a conclusive experiment in this field. It has organized a wonderful exhibition of treasures discovered at archaeological sites in Syria during 1952, which has met with well-deserved success. We ourselves

44:Matthews and Akrawi S, G-3 (1945-1946)1949 MI Middle East
SYRIA MDI

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versity. The committee makes its decisions on the basis of reports submitted to it by the Section of Educational Research of the Committee on Education and Instruction.

The Committee on Purchases is under the chairmanship of the accountant of the Ministry, with two other members appointed by the Director General of Education. It has charge of all buying of equipment, of receiving bids, and of preparing the contracts of the Ministry.

Beside the Directorate General of Education and its branches covering the system of public education for the entire country, three other institutions and agencies are connected directly with the Minister of Education:

1. The Department of Antiquities is headed by a director who is under the jurisdiction of the Minister. It has charge of the museum of antiquities, supervises all excavations, and preserves archeological sites. Its regulations are incorporated in Decree No. 352 (1945) "Embodying the Regulations of the Directorate of Antiquities."

2. The Syrian University, which until 1946 consisted of the Faculties of Medicine and Law, was in the process of reorganization at the time of the visit of the American Council Commission. It is described in chapter 22.

[814]

3. The Arab Academy, which was founded during the Arab government regime following World War I, is a body of learned Arabists, which has its own assembly of members in Syria and corresponding members in other Arabic and Islamic countries as well as among orientalists. It holds public lectures, issues a magazine known as the *Review of the Arab Academy* which appeared first in 1920 and in which are published the researches and studies of its members. It also maintains a public library which contains about 20,000 printed books and more than 4,000 Arabic manuscripts. The Academy has at times attempted to lay down Arabic equivalents to modern scientific terms.

[217]

Educational Finance

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Educational finance in Syria is centralized. The bulk of the expenditure on the schools and their equipment, on the salaries of teachers and janitors, comes from the budget of the Ministry of Education, which is a part of the general budget of the Syrian Republic. The Ottoman Education Laws of 1869 and 1913, which had remained the basic education laws during the French-mandate period, had provided that the expenditures of elementary schools should be borne by the local authorities. This, however, remained more a theoretical than a practical possibility in most of the Ottoman Empire. In Syria, some school buildings were provided—in Turkish, as in French, days—by the central governments, some by the localities or